

THOMAS CARLYLE IN AMERICA:
HIS REPUTATION AND INFLUENCE

BY

HOWARD DEFOREST WIDGER

B.A., Yale University, 1910

M.A., University of Illinois, 1930

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
ENGLISH IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1940

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For many years it has been generally asserted that Thomas Carlyle enjoyed a wide circle of readers in America, and that he exerted upon them a powerful influence. In spite of this, however, there have been surprisingly few competent studies of the evidence for the truth or falsity of such an assertion. Up to the present time, no single study has traced the course of his reputation in this country from its beginning down to the present time, showing the factors which determined it, or has tried to explore the specific effects of his various works. There have been, to be sure, important scholarly researches into some one aspect of his reputation or influence. Such was Mott's into Carlyle's American public, Vance's into his reputation prior to *Sartor Resartus*, and Bullock's into his reputation down to 1881 in so far as it was shown in American periodicals. The present investigation, therefore, had its genesis in a felt sense of need for further exploration of the subject and for an integration and interpretation in a single, coherent account of all the established facts.

Given such a purpose, certain fundamental obligations inherent in the nature of the problem devolved upon the investigator. In order to detect the influence of Carlyle's works and ideas it was necessary to become acquainted with what he had written and the nature of the thoughts expressed. To determine both his reputation and influence it was necessary to examine with care all available literature dealing with the man or his writings published in American books, periodicals, and newspapers. Books and magazines were not difficult to find, but newspapers presented many obstacles. No one library had a complete file of them, and some of those found were fragmentary. Consequently, the present writer selected representative journals and then visited libraries in various parts of the country where the files were most complete. Representative journals in New England, in the Middle Atlantic States, in the South, and in the Middle West were searched in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston (S. C.), St. Louis, and Chicago. Thus differences in the opinions of various sections of the country could be noted. Finally, it seemed necessary to know the course of thought and events in America from the beginning of the nineteenth century down to the present day, because Carlyle's reputation and influence were determined in part by the intellectual climate in which his ideas were scattered.

The America which first felt the impact of the young Scotchman was seething with new ideas and with change. Everywhere the spirit of the American and French Revolutions with their passion for liberty and

equality was rampant. The common man was just beginning to come into power. Democracy was the favored way of life. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution Americans sensed the value of their natural resources, now for the first time, by the aid of machines, capable of being converted into wealth. As a result, they were riding the crest of a great wave of optimism, which led them to dream of Utopias — political, economic, social.

Furthermore, from Germany young American scholars like George Ticknor, George Bancroft, Edward Everett, and John Sullivan Dwight had brought back a new spirit — definitely romantic, distinctly mystical, and somewhat sentimental. The philosophy of Kant and Fichte, the literature of Goethe, Novalis, and Richter were slowly filtering into American thought, some of it directly through those who could read German, but more of it indirectly through the writings of Coleridge and Wordsworth. Since Carlyle had drunk at the same German fountain and was still under the spell of the draught, his critical essays, reflecting the new stirrings in Germany, found a hearty response in America and became one of the most influential media for communicating it to those who dwelt in the New World.

As regards religious thought, the early years of the nineteenth century witnessed the almost complete rejection of Calvinism and in its stead the rise of Unitarianism. Under the new concept man was no longer a depraved creature, victim of a predetermined destiny; rather he was a potential son of God capable of shaping his own ends. Hence, the individual assumed a new importance, and his reformation and redemption became a much-to-be-desired end. Good works, a sensitive and healthy conscience, a quick response to the call of duty became essential to the good life — the very tap roots of Carlyle's philosophy.

Along with the upheaval in the realm of theology and religion came an equally significant change in philosophical concepts. Eighteenth-century Deism and Rationalism, which had been weighed in the balance and found wanting, were now definitely on the way out. The mechanistic and materialistic explanations of Locke and Hume were gradually giving way to a more spiritual outlook. Transcendentalism, inspired by such men as Emerson, Alcott, Hedge, Ripley and others, was gaining momentum, and was ready to seize upon and assimilate the sympathetic teachings of young Thomas Carlyle.

In addition to all these changes, American literature was just beginning to make itself felt and was in the next two or three decades to produce Emerson, Cooper, Poe, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier, and others as evidence of its potency. Newspapers and magazines were springing up like mushrooms, furnishing appropriate media for the propagation of new

ideas and the promotion of new writers. All things worked together to furnish fertile ground for the seed thoughts Thomas Carlyle was soon to scatter through the agency of his essays which appeared in the British periodicals.

This investigation has made it clear that Carlyle's writings first became known through the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Westminster Review*, the *Foreign Review*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and others of their kind. It is equally clear that his critical essays were anonymous, the author being unknown to any except a very limited circle of those who had some connections with foreign publishers. Consequently, his writings won attention solely on their intrinsic merits, without the lure of a great name. Yet attention they did attract both by the strange Teutonic idiom and style and by the stimulating character of the thought they expressed. Those which produced the greatest effect upon Americans were the "Essay on Burns" (1828), "Signs of the Times" (1829), "History" (1830), and "Characteristics" (1831). These, said Lowell, coupled with *Sartor Resartus*, "set astir" the Transcendental movement in America.

The effect of these stirring articles upon individual Americans was marked. They prompted Margaret Fuller and James Freeman Clarke to study and master the German language. They provoked animated discussion among the literati of Boston and Concord. They so piqued the curiosity of Ralph Waldo Emerson that he made inquiry as to the author and decided that he was one of the three men he desired most to visit in Europe. Thus they became the direct cause of the lasting friendship between the great American and the great Scotchman. After Emerson's visit at Craigenputtock, he became the propagator of Carlyle's fame in the New World. On his return home, Carlyle's name was used with increasing frequency, though still unofficially, in connection with the remarkable essays which had appeared in the British periodicals. Through Emerson's influence Carlyle began to emerge from the mists of anonymity.

At the very time Emerson was visiting his new friend in Scotland the first installment of *Sartor Resartus* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. Though it met with comparative neglect in the author's country, it won an enthusiastic reception in America. Not only did it circulate here in magazine form, but it was also printed in unbound sheets and passed about. Finally, Dr. Le Baron Russell in 1836 undertook its publication in book form, with an introduction by Emerson, through the Boston firm of James Munroe and Company. Though the name of Carlyle was attached to it only as the editor of Teufelsdröckh's manuscript, most of its Boston readers knew that he was really the author.

In spite of the fact that this volume met with some hostile criticism because of its vague, mystical, Germanic style, the strange-clad

philosophy attracted so many readers that a second edition was soon issued. It brought out likewise no inconsiderable number of imitators who aped its style but were barren of ideas. This investigation shows that it appealed most strongly to young men and women who delighted in its sledge hammer blows at hollow beliefs and dead institutions. Emerson, Alcott, Thoreau, Lowell, James Freeman Clarke, Margaret Fuller, and many others recorded their favorable response to it, though many of them had serious doubts about its form. Consciously or unconsciously it affected the mode of expression of college students and young writers. From the evidence uncovered by this study, it seems certain that the writings of Thoreau and Alcott show the impact of the style of *Sartor Resartus*.

Another indication of Carlyle's growing popularity was the large number of Americans who called upon him at his London home in Cheyne Row. That *Sartor Resartus* has continued to be popular is shown by the fact that it has gone through more American editions than any other of his books except the "Essay on Burns," which has been put out for use in high schools. The records show *Sartor* has appeared in thirty-seven different editions in this country. With it Carlyle's reputation in America was solidly established.

When the *French Revolution* appeared in 1837, Carlyle flung off the mask of anonymity. With it came fame and financial profit in this country. Emerson had made the arrangements for its publication. The history was received with widely divergent opinions. Some regarded it as a remarkable series of flame-colored pictures of the French upheaval, vivid, graphic, and distinctly moral. Others looked upon it as too subjective, and deficient in an explanation of the underlying forces that culminated in the titanic struggle. Many observed that Carlyle's interest lay primarily in men, not events; in action, not ideas. Prescott, the historian, hailed it as a "harlequin compound" and a "lamentable comedy." While a few objected to its barbarous style, most readers believed it to be an unusually dramatic and effective presentation of what was itself a series of dramatic events. Americans recognized, however, that it was a new kind of history, written from a subjective point of view and pointing a moral.

It was read eagerly in all parts of the United States, so that Arthur Buller, after his return from a visit here, reported to Carlyle that he was the most widely read author in America. From its American sales, the author received his first substantial royalties.

Like *Sartor Resartus* the *French Revolution* affected the writings of Americans. Barrett Wendell is sure that its picturesque descriptions affected the style of Lothrop Motley's writings, a judgment concurred in by Oliver Wendell Holmes and Van Wyck Brooks. Sherman believed it

contributed to Mark Twain's mode of expression; and there is a possibility that it had a part in shaping the ideals and writings of Francis Parkman.

So great was the popularity of Carlyle in 1838 that Emerson collected the early essays and published them under the title of *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, a work which has continued through the years among the more popular volumes of the author. The evidence is unmistakable that the *French Revolution* brought fame and prestige to Carlyle.

Because it dealt primarily with "the condition of England question," Carlyle's next book — *Chartism* (1839) — never had a great vogue on this side of the Atlantic, where the abundance of free or cheap land made for better conditions among laborers. It did serve, however, to call attention to the lack of security among industrial workers. Most critics in America regarded the analysis of the situation a sound one, but not the remedies proposed — emigration and universal education — holding them inadequate to produce any marked change for the better. As for the style, the reviewers noted that it displayed all the excellencies and defects of the author's previous writings.

In 1841 *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, originally a series of six lectures delivered in London, issued from the press. This gave the first explicit statement of Carlyle's hero doctrine, a doctrine, however, which was implicit in both *Sartor Resartus* and the *French Revolution*. Although most American readers, including Emerson, looked with favor upon the book, it did not receive so much attention from the reviewers as did his previous writings. Yet it was popular enough to be pirated by a New York publisher. Edgar Allan Poe, however, objected to the hero-worship it expressed, and called Thomas Carlyle "an ass." The evidence shows that *Heroes and Hero-Worship* has been a popular and much-read work, having appeared in the survey course in English literature in many American colleges and for a short time as one of the books listed for reading in the recommendations of the College Entrance Board.

With his next piece of writing — *Past and Present* (1843) — Carlyle turned once again "to the condition of England question," and once again he severely criticized the treatment of wage earners by modern industrialists. The responsibility of the employers did not cease with the payment of wages, he asserted. They should take into account sickness, poverty, unemployment, accidents, and old age and protect toilers against them. Rejecting the "Morrison Pill" of universal suffrage and ballot-boxes, he came out boldly for the regimentation of the masses under the leadership of captains of industry; and he pleaded for a greater sense of responsibility on the part of owners of the land.

The social gospel preached in *Past and Present* appealed to the humanitarian impulses of Americans. Emerson reviewed it favorably in the *Dial*, though he perceived the inadequacy of the proposed remedies. Orestes Brownson, while recognizing the underlying humaneness of its views, looked upon the book as a melancholy production. There were two points which Americans regarded with disfavor, namely, its rejection of the machinery of democracy and its setting up of the able man as the ruler. It aroused suspicion in the minds of many, even of those who accepted its social attitudes as sound, that the author was at heart a worshipper of might and force rather than of right and justice. It did not, nevertheless, destroy the confidence Americans had in him who had stirred their hearts with the moral earnestness of *Sartor Resartus*, and who had illumined the French Revolution by flashes of lightning. Rather, they looked forward eagerly to his next book on which he was now at work.

They did not have long to wait, for in December, 1845, Wiley and Putnam published at New York *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*. There was an almost unanimous opinion among newspaper and magazine critics in America that Carlyle had by his skillful editing and connective narrative succeeded in rehabilitating Cromwell's character, though some thought it was done at the expense of truth. That it was a first-rate piece of work was generally conceded, but that the author had cut and trimmed in order to make his subject conform to the pattern of a Carlylean hero was charged by some. New Englanders, descendants of the Puritans, were enthusiastic. Beneath all the criticism, however, was the tacit admission that the author had carried his hero theory so far that he seemed to approve all of Cromwell's deeds, even of the putting of the garrison at Drogheda to the sword.

On the whole, the book seemed to enhance Carlyle's reputation. Scores of Americans called upon him at Chelsea or took up cudgels in his defense. Among the visitors was Margaret Fuller, who, though she found it impossible to get her own words in edgewise, confessed she was impressed by the good the great man had done. Bronson Alcott was another caller, who left with a somewhat deflated opinion of his idol. In 1847 Emerson paid his second visit to the man whose works he had unceasingly promoted in the *New World*.

From a survey of the materials included in this investigation, the writer has concluded that never again was Carlyle so popular in America as he was in the years immediately following the publication of *Cromwell*. The very next piece of writing he was to compose brought him into conflict with a large and determined group of Americans who, up to this

time, had been his warmest friends, but who now in sorrow turned from him as an apologist for an indefensible institution — human slavery.

The immediate cause of this open hostility and loss of following was the appearance in 1849 of "An Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question." Up to this time Carlyle's staunchest support had come from New England, where the Abolition movement was strongest. Claiming the divine right of the white rulers to compel blacks with or without their consent to labor, he maintained that the rights of negroes were hardly worth discussing, and that "Quashee" was better off under a system of slavery than under the cash nexus of free labor and capitalism. Everywhere in the North, Abolitionists were bitter, especially in Boston where William Lloyd Garrison edited the *Liberator*. This journal denounced in no uncertain terms the inhumanity of Carlyle's views of the negro. No one, however, was more wounded by his stand than was Whittier, the Quaker Abolitionist, who administered a stinging rebuke to Carlyle for his insensibility to suffering and injustice and his blunt denial of the most sacred human rights. In the South, on the other hand, this essay was looked upon as a merited rebuff to northern fanaticism.

If the "Discourse on the Nigger Question" undermined Carlyle's popularity and alienated from him the Abolitionists, his next utterances — *The Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) — cost him even more dearly in prestige and discipleship. In this series Americans for the most part beheld an entirely different man from the one to whom they had given allegiance in the eighteen-thirties and eighteen-forties, for these papers revealed him as a thorough-going anti-democrat, completely out of sympathy with all reform movements directed at establishing a more humane treatment of the unfortunate. Not only was he out of sympathy, but he even sneered at those who were devoting their lives to philanthropic causes. Besides, he dismissed Americans as "eighteen million bores" and the nobler impulses of their hearts as mawkish sentimentality.

All sections of America resented such a characterization. Especially bitter was the press of Boston where he had hitherto been most widely read and admired, but Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore were equally condemnatory. The evidence of the newspapers shows that the effect of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* upon Carlyle's reputation was even greater than has been generally supposed, for they revealed him as a cynical, scolding, ill-tempered, jeering individual who despised popular government.

While the furor aroused by the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* was still at its height, Carlyle wrote the *Life of John Sterling* (1851). This book did not attract much attention in the United States, chiefly because its subject was practically unknown. Those who read it, however, agreed that its

style was more simple and pleasing than any other of his writings since the *Life of Schiller*. They were more concerned with it as a revelation of Carlyle than of Sterling. The most common adverse criticism levelled at the biography was its attitude of scepticism toward Christian doctrine. In a sense, the volume was an interlude, and it had little effect on the author's reputation in America except as it helped to take away the bad taste left by the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*.

During the eighteen-fifties the United States was drifting toward civil strife over the issue of slavery. Carlyle had already given offense to the Abolitionists by his "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question." In 1861 open conflict began. North and South engaged in a bloody battle to determine whether the Union was indissoluble and whether slavery was to survive in the nation. For this war, Carlyle had nothing but contempt, regarding it as the greatest exhibition of human folly in modern times — brothers killing brothers over the question of the burning out of a dirty chimney. Until 1863, however, he refrained from public utterances concerning it; then in a six-line lampoon entitled "*Ilias Americana in Nuce*" he jestingly intimated that the only issue at stake was whether blacks were to be hired by the month or day, as the North contended, or for life, as the South preferred.

In the North, this provoked bitterness and hatred. It was impossible for people to believe that Thomas Carlyle, who had once stood for an emphasis upon spiritual considerations, could jest on a matter which involved the fate of a nation and the freedom of a race. Consequently, the press of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago heaped contempt and ridicule upon him. Never did six lines play greater havoc with an author's reputation than these. Americans might have forgiven his disagreeing with them, but they could not forgive his jeers, his sneers, and his mockery. Though the Southern newspapers examined showed little comment, it is probable even the South felt the insult implied in his joking about their agony. From a feeling of love and admiration, Americans turned to anger, resentment, and contempt.

In the meantime Carlyle had been working patiently upon his monumental history and biography of *Frederick the Great*, the first two volumes of which were published in 1858 and the last two in 1865. For the most part, Americans were too much engrossed with the question of slavery and the preservation of the Union to give the books of a foreign author much attention, especially of one who had gone out of his way to insult them. Yet there were a few well written reviews, such as that by Lowell.

On the whole, the volumes met a chilly reception. Critics recognized that a vast undertaking had been completed, one calling for patient, pains-

taking research; but Americans had little stomach for the German autocrat. There were no doubt brilliant passages describing battles and battlefields; there were unforgettable portraits to be added to those previously painted in the *French Revolution*; there was, as Emerson perceived, rich humor; but yet the work left readers cold. For one thing, it was prolix and tedious, sadly in need of compression. For another, readers distrusted the soundness of the interpretation given Frederick, because he no longer appeared like a figure of history but like a glorified embodiment of the Carlylean hero. Besides, they found Carlyle placing might and force above right, and autocracy above democracy. The net result was that Carlyle's stock in the American market declined.

The suspicion that Carlyle was now the advocate of autocracy was confirmed in the minds of Americans by his essay on "Shooting Niagara" in 1867. Though it was ostensibly addressed to Englishmen, whose democracy was headed toward the "Niagara leap" or the pit, its author again sneered at the Americans and their silly handling of the "nigger question," thus opening old wounds caused by the "Ilias Americana in Nuce." Most people regarded the preservation of the Union as a vindication of the Civil War, and the abolition of slavery as a genuine achievement of democracy. Hence, the essay aroused antagonism once again toward the "arch growler."

So moved was Walt Whitman by the essay that he wrote a sizzling reply, in which he referred to Carlyle's strictures as "comic-painful hullabaloo" and "vituperative cat-squalling." It apparently prompted a long passage in Lowell's "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners." It impaired Carlyle's reputation still further, though it had the wholesome effect of forcing Americans to examine the institution of democracy and the instrumentalities set up for fostering it.

With the "Shooting of Niagara" Carlyle's work as an author practically came to an end. He was an old man now, and what had been before the Civil War a stream of visitors from the New World had become a mere trickle. In 1872, however, Emerson for the third and last time went to visit the friend of former years who in the dark days of the war had exasperated him with his lack of sympathy and understanding. But Emerson had a forgiving spirit, and Carlyle could not forget the yeoman service his Concord friend had rendered in spreading his fame and promoting the publication of his books. Partly as a token of respect for Emerson, partly as an expression of gratitude to American readers, and partly as a reparation for the cruel strictures he had levelled at the United States, Carlyle donated the collection of books he had used in writing *Frederick the Great* to Harvard University, in return for which gift Harvard conferred upon him an honorary degree.

On February 5, 1881, Carlyle died, and so became the subject of editorials and obituaries in newspapers and magazines. The survey of American journals makes it clear that his passing was most deeply mourned in New England, where his genius had first been recognized. As one goes from Boston, the grief seemed to diminish directly as the distance. Naturally, there were varying estimates of the man and his works; yet on a few judgments there was substantial agreement. He had rendered great service in his earlier days by his assistance in spreading a knowledge of German literature, by his firm stand against the mechanistic materialism of Locke and Hume, by his social sympathy with the workers, and by his unflinching condemnation of all forms of sham and hypocrisy. Against him was charged a style that was "Babylonish" and difficult, an abandonment of his early idealism for a sterner and more cynical attitude, a persistent opposition to democracy, and a worship of force and might. Most writers deplored his attitude toward our Civil War and slavery but admitted his greatness as a writer, which, however, they believed would rest upon his earlier works.

This investigation has attempted to trace Carlyle's reputation from the time of his death down to the present day, a period of almost sixty years, during which it experienced many vicissitudes. Four outstanding factors have determined his posthumous reputation, namely, the Carlyle-Froude controversy, the publication of his correspondence, the World War of 1914-1918, and the work of American scholars.

The controversy concerning Froude began with the publication immediately after Carlyle's death of his *Reminiscences*, papers which had been written following the death of his father and that of his wife in which he heaped reproaches upon himself for his unsympathetic treatment of those whom he had really loved. The book had the effect, not of debunking him, but of showing him as a man full of infirmities and human weaknesses. While many of Carlyle's friends feared its effect on his reputation, the evidence indicates that on the whole it helped more than injured his standing; for while it stripped him of some of the glamor with which admirers had invested him, the sincerity and candor of his comments created confidence.

His reputation was still further threatened by Froude's *Life of Carlyle* in four volumes. Without attempting to whitewash the subject of the biography, Froude drew heavily on the journals and letters of the dead man. The real issue was whether these selections had been judiciously made and correctly interpreted. In England there was a large group of people who were furious with Froude, maintaining that he had by his indiscretions, his excisions, and false emphasis done untold damage to Carlyle's reputation. American opinion, however, did not agree

with this view, but sustained Froude's judgment and accepted his interpretations.

Froude's next venture was to publish as editor the *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*. Once again the unlovely side of Carlyle's character was laid bare, and once again Carlyle partisans accused Froude of exalting the character of the wife by debasing that of the husband. Once more American opinion approved of Froude, though not unanimously. In England, Alexander Carlyle, in an effort to counteract Froude's volume, edited and published *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*.

With the details of the feud between the adherents and enemies of Froude it is unnecessary to deal. Suffice it to say that the evidence examined in this investigation makes it clear that in the main Americans sided with Froude, and that his interpretation of Carlyle is the one generally accepted here. It is of more than passing interest to note that the best résumé of the entire dispute and the most objective analysis of the evidence involved in it was made by an American — Waldo H. Dunn — in *Froude and Carlyle* (1930).

The publication of Carlyle's correspondence again brought Carlyle into the public eye in America. Naturally Americans were interested in the *Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence* (1883) edited by C. E. Norton. This volume undoubtedly added to the stature of both men in the minds of those who read it. This was followed by the *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle 1814-1826* (1886) and the *Letters of Thomas Carlyle 1826-1836* (1888), both edited by Norton. In 1887 the *Correspondence Between Goethe and Carlyle* was made public. In 1904 Alexander Carlyle added the *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle 1836-1879*. Later Carlyle's letters to his sister, the *Love Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh*, and Carlyle's letters to Mill, Sterling, and Robert Browning found their way into print. Taken as a whole, the present investigator believes that these letters helped to restore Carlyle in public esteem in America. They revealed him as a rare letter writer, an incomparable portrait painter, and at times a man of tenderness.

When the World War plunged Europe and America into a devastating conflict, there arose the question of how far modern Germany represented the ideals of the great Scotchman as he had revealed them in *Cromwell* and *Frederick the Great*. While the attempt to prove Kaiser Wilhelm II to be the embodiment of the very qualities Carlyle had praised in Frederick failed, there can be little doubt that Carlyle's reputation suffered a decline in both England and America. Nevertheless, the discussion had one salutary effect. It forced a re-examination of his views and served to keep him alive in the minds of that generation.

All the evidence points to the conclusion that Carlyle has been a subject which has appealed to the imagination of American scholars, for they have investigated his life and literature and have recorded their findings in books, magazine articles, and dissertations. Nor has there been in recent years any notable decline in this interest in him. Since 1910 he has engaged the serious attention of men like William Frederick Roe, Charles Frederick Harrold, Waldo H. Dunn, and Emery Neff. Each of these has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge. The significance of their work is twofold: first, it is an indication of a wholesome curiosity about Carlyle — an effect; and, secondly, it has been a stimulus to still greater curiosity in others — a cause.

Carlyle's influence in America has been not that of a leader of thought but of a stimulator of it. From the beginning his works have challenged men to examine their faiths and their institutions in order to distinguish the reality from the mere garments with which it was clothed. In his early days he injected into the American mind ideas gleaned from German philosophy and literature, he placed a new emphasis on material and spirit, he called attention to the plight of industrial workers, and he spurred to thought and action. Even after he had turned conservative his opposition to rose-water philanthropy and to democratic procedures forced men to consider the grounds for their beliefs and hopes. In the lump that was America he became a leaven.

The main outlines of the changes in his reputation are clear. His reputation began in the eighteen-twenties with the anonymous publication of the periodical essays; was solidly established by *Sartor Resartus* (1836); reached the proportions of fame with the *French Revolution* (1837); grew greater with the appearance of *Chartism* (1839), *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841), and *Past and Present* (1843); attained its height with the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845). It declined with the alienation of the Abolitionists on the appearance of "An Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question" (1849); fell markedly with his attack on humanitarian reform and democratic government set forth in the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850); sank to an all-time low during the Civil War because of his many private utterances and of the mocking, jesting tone of "Ilias Americana in Nuce" (1863). It did not recover after *Frederick the Great* lauded might and force, nor did it revive with "Shooting Niagara." At death, it rose, because the re-appraisal of his character and writings revealed elements of greatness. Since death, his reputation has suffered many ups and downs, but the facts seem to justify the conclusion that he has won back some of the esteem which for a time he had forfeited, and that Americans continue to read him and learn more about him.

VITA

The writer of this dissertation, Howard DeForest Widger, son of Byron E. and Lida Phelps Widger, was born in Homer, New York, in 1887. At the age of six, he moved with his parents to a farm in Tompkins County and attended a rural school until he entered the Central High School of Cortland, New York, where he graduated in 1905. The following year was spent pursuing academic studies in the Cortland State Normal School. From 1906 to 1910 he was a student at Yale University, graduating in 1910 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. While at Yale, he was for two years a member of the Varsity debating teams, the winner of the Thatcher Prize for debating, a member of Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity, and in his senior year the Walter Husted Scholar. In 1910 he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. On leaving Yale, he entered the Columbia University Law School, where he completed the first year's work. From 1911 to 1912 he was an instructor of English at the Massachusetts Agricultural College. In 1912 he became a member of the Department of English at the Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, Charleston, Illinois. During a leave of absence for 1928-1930 he was an assistant in English at the University of Illinois. Again he had a leave of absence for 1938-1939 to complete the courses required for a doctor's degree at the University of Illinois. He has edited for D. C. Heath and Co. Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*, written two workbooks in English for use in junior high schools, contributed two book reviews to the *English Journal*, and numerous articles on reading and English in elementary school journals. At present he holds the rank of Professor of English at the Eastern Illinois State Teachers College. He is a member of Phi Delta Kappa. The present dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



